

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

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R 190611 Z MAY 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T STATE 096603

EXDIS

FOR SULLIVAN AND ALDRICH

FOLL SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO SECSTATE FROM CAN THO 17 MAY 73
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T CAN THO 0325

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS USDAO SAIGON AND USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB, VS

SUBJECT: F-111 BEACON INSTALLATION AND TARGET ACQUISITION

REFERENCE: CAN THO 299, 318, 319, USDAO MESSAGE DTG
101010 Z MAY 73 (SPECAT)

1. CAN THO 299 REPORTS THE SUCCESSFUL INSTALLATION OF THE
F-111 BEACON JUST WITHIN VIETNAMESE TERRITORY ON THE KIEN
PHONG- CAMBODIAN BORDER. THE CONSULATE GENERAL RECOMMENDS
THE FOLLOWING POINTS BE FOLLOWED OR KEPT IN MIND DURING ANY
FURTHER BEACON OR TARGET ACQUISITION OPERATIONS.

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2. USDAO'S REFERENCED MESSAGE NOTES THAT MR IV WILL SUBMIT ALL F-111 TARGET THROUGH JGS. USDAO COORDINATED MAY 9 AND MAY 13 F-111 BEACON INSTALLATION AND REPAIR AND MAY 15 TARGET ACQUISITION ARRANGEMENTS DIRECTLY WITH MR IV THROUGH THE CONSULATE GENERAL. WE RECOMMEND USDAO CLEAR FUTURE BEACON OPERATIONS AND TARGET ACQUISITION MISSIONS WITH EMBASSY SAIGON AND THEN DEAL WITH RVNAF THROUGH THE JGS, KEEPING THE CONSULATE GENERAL INFORMED. WHILE MR IV FINDS THE BEACON IN ITS INTEREST AND ACCORDINGLY IS MOST HELPFUL, ASSIGNING ACTION THROUGH JGS WILL ENSURE CONTINUED COOPERATION.

3. KEEPING F-111 COORDINATION MATTERS IN VIETNAMESE CHANNELS WILL PROVIDE USDAO WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND JGS OF THE BEACON'S PURPOSE. DURING THE INSTALLATION OF THE BEACON AND ITS SUBSEQUENT REPAIR, A CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER ACCOMPANYING THE AIR FORCE TECHNICALS, NOTED THAT THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE BEACON'S MISSION RAPIDLY TAILED OFF FROM CORPS LEVEL DOWN TO THE OUTPOST WHERE THE BEACON WAS INSTALLED. MR IV COMMANDER, MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI, AND 9 TH DIVISION COMMANDER, MGEN TRAN BA DI, BOTH UNDERSTOOD CLEARLY THAT THE F-111(S) WOULD ONLY STRIKE TARGETS IN CAMBODIA AND THAT THE BEACON'S SOLE PURPOSE WAS TO SUPPORT BOMBING IN CAMBODIA. IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO REGIMENTAL AND BATTALION COMMANDERS THAT THE F-111'S WOULD NOT BOMB IN VIET NAM. NEVERTHELESS, UPON DEPARTURE OF THE US TEAM FROM THE SITE ON MAY 13, THE ARVN MAJOR IN COMMAND HANDED THE AMERICANS' VIETNAMESE INTERPRETER A LIST OF TARGET COORDINATES-- ALL OF THEM IN VIET NAM. THE LIST WAS REFUSED. WE HAVE CLEARLY EXPLAINED THE BEACON'S PURPOSE TO MR IV AND WILL EMPHASIZE AGAIN THAT SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS BE REMINDED.

4. THE CONSULATE GENERAL IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH SECURITY LEAKS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE BEACON. WHEN THE USAF COMBAT CONTROL TEAM MEMBERS ARRIVED MAY 9 TO INSTALL THE BEACON, AN AIR AMERICA HELICOPTER PILOT GREETED THEM WITH THE QUESTION "ARE YOU THE FELLOWS WHO CAME TO INSTALL THE F-111 BEACON?" THE VERY SURPRISED AIR FORCE MEN MADE A NONCOMMITTAL REPLY. APART FROM THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE
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BEEN LEAKS ON THE AMERICAN SIDE, THE EXISTENCE OF THE BEACON IS NOW KNOWN TO A LARGE NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE, INCLUDING NUMEROUS ARVN DESERTERS PRESSED INTO AN ARVN LABOR GANG THAT KIBITZED THE INSTALLATION. THE PRG'S ACCUSATIONS OF ILLEGAL US BOMBING IN MR 3, MAKE IT FURTHER IMPERATIVE THAT ALL OF US PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SECURITY AND THAT NO UNFOUNDED RUMORS REGARDING THE BEACON'S

MISSION ARE GENERATED. INFORMATION MESSAGES AND REQUESTS
FOR ASSISTANCE MUST BE SENT TO US TELEGRAPHICALLY. THE
CONSULATE GENERAL HAS NO SECURE TELEPHONE FACILITIES.
WISNER UNQUOTE RUSH

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